

THE CONCEPT OF CHROMATICISM IN ROBERT SCHUMANN'S KINDERSCENEN.

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ABSTRACT

Music as an art represents composer's ideas or mind. The ideas are induced or stimulated by their thoughts. On this premise, this researcher derives the title with the aim of analysing an aspect of music - Chromaticism. Hence, this leads to deducing its symbolic meanings, which epitomises sociological traits, personal identity and emotional reaction of the selected composer.

The term chromatics is associated with colours. *Chroma* and *chromaticism* are two concepts that have been redefined several times through the centuries. The idea of relating colours to music is not new. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle unwittingly launched the challenging "Colour Music" in his work entitled *De Sensu*. Both Aristotle and Pythagoras had early considered the existing correlation between musical scale and colours (D. Margounakis 21). The conversion of sound to images has been a representation of the significant meanings between the two types of media. The method for converting images to music and vice-versa provides the area of computer music with a parameterized environment for audio-visual presentations. However, the theoretical approach to the determination of the chromatic index of the selected works of Robert Schumann will be deduced vividly. The theoretical methods to giving the meanings of chromatics in some selected the western musical works and themes will be enumerated comprehensively. The word 'concept' as used in the context of the subject matter is philosophical. This philosophy of concept provides the background to this study and this is viewed in line with the theory of chromatics. Therefore, this provides the basis for deriving the symbolic meanings of chromatics in the works of the chosen epoch (Nineteenth Century). However, analytical approach is given to the selected works of the composer of nineteenth century with a view to demystify the sociological and psychological meanings of chromatic employment - the main focus of the research. The definition of chromatics provides a standard characterization: "In melodic and harmonic analysis the term 'chromatic' is generally applied to notes marked with accidentals foreign to the scale of the key in which the passage is written" (Dyson & Drabkin 32). The use of at least some pitches of the chromatic scale in addition to or instead of those of the diatonic scales of some particular keys can occur in limited degrees that do not detract from the sense of key or tonal center; thus it can function within the system of tonic – dominant- tonality. The definitions of chromatics (both in harmonic and melodic contexts) are the inspiration behind the choice of the selected works of Robert Schumann for symbolic deductions.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The derivation of the title is established on philosophical perspectives of the word 'Concept'. Inspiration is also drawn from different authors' views on chromatic theories and forms. Not much have been written by music scholars or authors on the analysis of chromatic structure of Robert Schumann, let alone the deduction of their chromatic concepts which is the main objective of this research. Therefore, this study explores information on chromatics so as to emphatically formalize, revalidate and generate ideas from the analysis of chromatic theories and forms in the selected work - *Kinderscenen*. In addition, this study is embarked upon so as to make music scholars to be more inventive and imaginative in their approach to employing chromatics in musical compositions by relating its technical applications to symbolic meanings which is discussed comprehensively. The motive behind this study is to investigate the theory of symbolism, if it's capable of validating the concept of chromaticism in the selected works. Partly to explore apparent sociological traits of the selected composer as reflected in the construed symbolic meanings of chromatics. And also to identify chromatic notes and chromatic harmony (chords) in *Kinderscenen*. Moreover, this paper aims at examining the form of chromatic structure employed in the music of Robert Schumann selected for this investigation. Lastly, this study ascertains the inferred symbolic meanings as demystified from technical analysis of chromatic melody and chromatic harmony (chords). By and large, this paper traces the essence of chromaticism in music with a view to establishing the principles and ideologies behind its theory and practice.

The word ‘concept’ as used in the context of the subject matter is philosophical. This philosophy of concept provides the background to this study and this is viewed in line with the theory of chromatics. Therefore, this provides the basis for deriving the symbolic meanings of chromatics in the various epochs (Antiquity to 20th century). However, analytical approach is given to the selected works of some composers within nineteenth century and twentieth century (the main focus of the research) to highlight the symbolic meanings of their chromatic usage.

Concept is a word that can be used interchangeably with meaning, significance, and idea. In the context of this research, the use of meaning and significance are most appropriate. According to the definition by Simon Blackburn, “a concept is that which is understood by a term, particularly a predicate. To possess a concept is to be able to deploy a term expressing it in making judgments: the ability connects with such things as recognizing when the term applies, and being able to understand the consequences of its application” (P:70)

Meaning and significance can be re-expressed as conceptual analysis which is understood by Simon Blackburn as the meaning and true conditions of propositions that would be displayed by a process that revealed hidden logical structure beneath the surface form of statements” (P:13). This statement was an inspiration derived from the works of Russell.

The meanings and significances in this regard are evident in the symbols of chromatics as employed by the selected composer. One of the major contributions of Bertrand Russell to Epistemology is his “theory of symbolism” as part of his logical atomism within the focus of traditional epistemology. He also proffered answers to the object of recognition or knowledge. However, a new strand of ‘meaning’ was added by him in the theory of logical atomism. He notes that ‘meaning’ means infinite numbers of different things. It is more of a ‘psychological’ notion and it is not possible to get a pure logical theory of meaning nor therefore of symbolism”. Russell described symbol as something that ‘means’ something else”.

For us to know what it takes for words to mean or to know what one means by a symbol, Russell proffers that one should take account of such things as knowing, of cognitive relations and probably also of association (Marsh1956:186).

Relatively, chromatics is considered as the symbol (proposition) for this research and this research somehow deals with what the subject-matter (chromatics) symbolises in the seven scenes selected from Kinderscenen. The theory of symbolism here is associated with the meanings and significances of chromatics. However, these findings are based on the analysis of the works so as to establish the facts of chromatic meanings. This is in line with Russell notion that held the basic assumption that for a complete account of the world to be given, an account of facts has to be taken. This is not done by mere enumerating facts, i.e the particular things, and their properties, and so forth (Marsh 192). Ontologically, facts belong to the world of objects; they are *prima facie* more than the symbols that represent them, and also, it is not quite possible to explain facts away. Facts are ‘related’ ontologically, and propositions also attempt to capture this relation. The complexity and analyzability of symbols (or propositions) is more obvious than that of a fact. Since propositions are made of various words which may even go on to occur in other different propositions), it shows that they are complex and subject of analysis. Russell therefore proffers and argues that the complexity of a fact justifies why we have to begin with analysis in our epistemology.

“The circumstance that the proposition which assert a fact consists of several words; each of which may occur in other contexts, “(implies that there is a possibility of cutting up a fact into component parts, of which one may be altered without altering others, and one component may occur in certain other facts though not in all other facts” (Marsh 193).

The term chromatics is associated with colours. ‘Chroma’ and ‘chromaticism’ are two concepts that have been redefined several times through the centuries. The idea of relating colours to music is not new. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle unwittingly launched the challenging “Colour Music” in his work entitled De Sensu. Both Aristotle and Pythagoras had early considered the existing correlation between musical scale and colours (D.Margounakis 21). Progressively, the association of the attribute *chroma* (the Greek word for colour) with colours and music perception has been enunciated comparatively by different scholars. However, the theoretical approach to giving the meanings of chromatics in some selected western music works and themes will be described comprehensively.

Furthermore, the conversion of sound to images has been a representation of the significant meanings between the two types of media. The method for converting images to music and vice-versa provides the area of computer music with a parameterized environment for audio-visual presentations. The auditory display of colour images brings different ways that a listener perceives a musical piece (because of colour transitions) to light (D.Margounakis 22).

Recent trends in the area of computer music are related to mappings between images and sound. Usually, this kind of mapping is based on the attributes of images and sounds which serves as the source of inspiration for the concept of chromaticism. But apart from those obvious dimensions (such as frequency, magnitude, size, resolution etc.), there are also some other “hidden” dimensions in a picture or a musical piece, which contain useful information. The important thing here is that chroma is mostly associated with the human perception of sound. Certain chromatic values are considered to generate certain chromatic impressions and feelings to people, the same as certain colour combinations do. Inherently, this argument by Margounakis inspires and establishes the motive behind the derivation of the word ‘concept’ which serves as the nucleus to the resultant findings from technical analysis to the symbolic meanings (simplicity).

Chromaticism can be defined in different ways. Harvard dictionary of music explains Chromatics as the full gamut of notes available in the octave (67). When seven tones out of twelve are selected to form a major or minor key, the other five become extraneous in relation to that key and its tonic note. They enter the composition only occasionally, mainly to embellish the melody or harmony. In order for a piece to sound firmly rooted in a key, seven notes of the key should prevail. If the five foreign tones become too prominent in the melody and harmony, the relationship to the key center is weakened, and the key feeling becomes ambiguous. The distinction between the tones that do not belong within the key area and those that do is expressed in the contrasting terms “chromatic” and “diatonic” (J. Machlis & K. Forney 117).

The definition of chromatics provides a standard characterization:

“In melodic and harmonic analysis the term ‘chromatic’ is generally applied to notes marked with accidentals foreign to the scale of the key in which the passage is written” (Dyson & Drabkin 32).

Most music theorists would use this as a point of departure for an extended discussion of the importance of chromaticism in relation to musical organization – including both vertical (harmonic) and horizontal (melodic) processes.

This definition, however has a number of potential pitfalls which must be acknowledged at the outset. For example, it is possible that a passage modulates to a different key without a commensurate change of key signature. Consequently, an accidental may render a note consistent with this prevailing (modulated) key yet be construed as “chromatic” in light of the key signature. Another difficulty with this operational definition is that it fails to distinguish “degrees” of chromaticism. For example, a chromatic passing tone might be viewed as less indicative of “chromaticism” than a structural chromatic tone. Therefore, this research attempts to identify general trends of chromatic employments from a large volume of music. Analyzing each non-scale tone in order to classify it as structural or non-structural would be impractical. Although our operational definition of “chromatic” fails to capture all of the nuances of chromatic theory, it may nevertheless provide a practical index that characterizes the broad trends (D. Perttu 44).

Diverse cultural values influence the usage of chromatics by composers of different sociological and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this study subsumes analysis of musical pieces by the selected composers. The concepts of chromaticism as applied by the composer of the nineteenth century in relation to his sociological backgrounds are vividly analysed in order to reveal the chromatic content and intent of their works.

The use of at least some pitches of the chromatic scale in addition to those of the diatonic scale of some particular key can occur in limited degrees that do not detract from the sense of key or tonal center. Thus it can function within the system of tonic – dominant – tonality (James 97)

The harmonies resulting from chromatic voice leading whether or not for the sake of modulation to remote keys are often described as altered chords, including the Neapolitan sixth formed on the flattened supertonic, and the several augmented chords. The diminished seventh chord is inherently chromatic, Since it cannot be constructed from the diatonic pitches of a single key (though it can occur on the raised leading note in the harmonic minor scale); Because its four pitches are disposed symmetrically with respect to the octave. It functions equally well as the diminished seventh on the seventh scale degree in four different keys (and in other ways in other keys) and thus facilitates modulation. Also inherently chromatic though much less prominent in tonal music is the augmented triad (Karol 76). The resurgence of tonality in some art music of recent decades, however, reasserts the historical relationship between chromaticism and diatonicism. This somehow, suggests that considerable chromaticism of most jazz and popular musical styles can also be understood as elaborative and underlying diatonic structures. However, the theoretical

KURIOSE GESCHICHTE

CURIOUS STORY/STRANGE STORY OP.15/2 (D MAJOR)

- ❖ Bar 1 → The chromatic chord formed is a minor 6th chord built on 3rd degree of the scale which is then resolved to II 7 chord.
- ❖ Bar 2 → A borrowed chord, tonic minor (chord i) was used and then resolved to tonic major (chord I)
- ❖ Bar 5 → As in Bar 1
- ❖ Bar 6 → As in Bar 2
- ❖ Bar 8 → A borrowed chord II7/V, (supertonic dominant) resolved to chord V
- ❖ Bar 8 → An altered minor chord that was constructed on dominant note
And then resolved to chord IV.
- ❖ Bar 9 → Augmented 5th chord was followed by a major chord that was
Constructed on flattened leading note (C natural) and then
Resolved to a dissonant chord IV/9.
- ❖ Bar 13-16 → Same as from bars 1-4
- ❖ Bar 18 → A diminished chord constructed on D-sharp is resolved into

HASCHEMANN

CATCH ME/BLINDMAN'S BUFF OP.15/3

- ❖ Bar 4 → A non-functional chromatic (E, A#, B) chord resolved to home B minor which is the key of the piece.
- ❖ Bar 8 → A non-functional chromatic chord (E, A#, B) resolved to B minor chord
- ❖ Bar 15 → A non-functional chromatic chord (F#, G#, A#, E) resolved to B minor chord in bar 17
- ❖ Bar 20 & 21 → As in bar 4 (end)

→ BITTENDES KIND

ENTREATING CHILD/PLEADING CHILD OP.15/4

- Bar 1 → Diminished chord built on leading note resolved to chord V 7
- Bar 2 → Diminished 7th chord built on the tonic and then resolved to chord V in arpeggiation form
- Bar 4 → As in bar 2
- Bar 5 → Chord I 7 (dominant 7) resolved to IV⁶₄ chord

- Bar 6 → Diminished chord resolved to chord I
- Bar 7 → As in bar 5
- Bar 9 → A minor 6th chord, using the added note as passing note and resolved to chord V
- Bar 10 → Passing chromatic notes to resolve to chord V
- Bar 11 → As in bar 9
- Bar 17 → Imperfect cadence (admonished chord built on tonic) used at the penultimate bar is finally resolved to chord V 7

TRAUMEREI:

DREAMING 6 REVERIE OP 15/7

- Bar 7 → Tonic minor chord is resolved to V⁴ chord. Then diminished 7th that is built on median of the home key and resolved to chord ⁶ dominant 7th on the 8th bar.
- Bar 11 → Diminished 7th built on dominant note of the key and then resolved to chord ii
- Bar 14 → Borrowed chord III and then resolved to chord VI
- Bar 15 → Diminished 7th built on supertonic is resolved to Vi ⁶ 4
- Bar 22 → Major 9th built on supertonic of the home key then resolved to chord I⁴ ⁶ and then submediant major chord (VI) resolved to (ii chord ii (supertonic minor)

FURCHTENMACHEN:

A BIT FRIGHTENING – OPUS 15/11

- Bar 1 → ⁶he chromatic chord started on a high register or pitch: First inversion mediant major (III ³) followed by tonic minor chord
- Bar 2 → non-functional chord (C[#], E, B, B^b) followed by diminished 7th chord built on sub dominant note and then resolved to chord I on bar 3
- Bar 13 → As in Bar 1
- Bar 14 → As in Bar 2
- Bar 21 → Sub-mediant major chord (IV) resolved to chord ii minor on bar 22
- Bar 23 → Major chord constructed on Leading note (VII) resolved to chord iii (mediant minor chord)

KIND im EINSCHLUMMERN – Child Falling Asleep (OP.15/12)

- Bar 1 → ⁶ (E minor – E major – E minor)
Chord V³ in harmonic scale is resolved to chord vi
- Bar 2 → As in Bar 1 with the same resolution in Bar 4

The chromatic movements in Bar 1 and 2 were repeated throughout the first 8 bar of the music. A transition then took place through Tiers De Picardy to the key of E major.

Bar 12 → A low-pitched dominant 7th chord constructed on supertonic is resolved to V⁶₄ chord.

Bar 17 → An altered chord V (a minor chord that was constructed on dominant note) was resolved to chord IV.

Bar 20 → High-pitched dominant 7th chord constructed on supertonic is resolved to chord V.

Bar 21 → Transition from E major back to E minor

Bar 25 – 32 → The same as Bar 1 to bar 8.

FINDINGS: Technical Deductions from the Analysis of Chromatic Theory in Schumann's Kinderscenen.

Momentary chromaticism

This happens sometimes in schumann's concept of chromaticism whereby a chromatic note is considered a "non – harmonic" tension and is quickly resolved (usually by step) to a consonance (usually a note in the chord). This is the simplest approach to applying chromaticism as an element of "spice" or surprise in an otherwise tonally – predictable passage of music. The chromatic note is being justified as a non – harmonic tension or passing note, which points towards – and places importance upon – the note to which it resolves. In so – doing, momentum or forward motion is created. The "inside – outside – inside" paradigm, where the composer (schumann) weaves in and out of a tonal progression, is a common application by him. He showed his mastery over the rules that govern conventional chord – scales, cadences in some part of his works.

Delayed Resolution

Schumann showed in some sectioning of his works that chromatic note can be "elongated" or prolonged in time before eventual resolution. This concept increases the importance of the "wrong" note. The opposition of chromaticism against tonality as opposing forces takes the role of dissonance to the next level. Through chromaticism is enjoyed somewhat for its own sand, it still relies on the relativity of consonance. It is anchored in tonality. Such chromatic passages are elongated beyond normal expectation so that the resolution of tension is delayed.

Moreover, his concepts of chromaticism lead to ultrachromaticism and non-functional harmony-chords that have no familiar, ordered or traditional chord progressions or associations.

Symbolic Meanings Deduced from the Analysis of Chromatic Theory in Schumann's Kinderscenen.

1. **Strangeness:** Robert Schumann used chromatics in a way that cannot be understood based on structure because of his imaginative concept. The strangeness is achieved by having unresolved and non-functional chords or notes as employed in bars 2, 13 & 14 of Furchtenmachen which are expression of fright in the kinderscenen. There was also a degree of strangeness in bar 4 of Haschemann (catch me). Some chromatic chords also reflects some strangeness in bars 1,2,8,9,&19 which interpret the scene-Kuriose Geschichte in Kinderscenen.
2. **Remoteness:** The employment of chromatics by Robert Schumann in kinderscenen is a reflection of his loneliness whereby his mind was peculiarly attracted by disproportionate and excessive features. That is, the use of unresolved chords and repetition of chromatic chords in each musical scene depict his remoteness.. This is shown in bar 12 of kind imEinschlummern (child falling asleep) where a low-pitched dominant 7th chord constructed on supertonic is resolved to V⁶₄ chord. Also bars 1,12 are expressed in the same manner to show loneliness.

- 3. Emotional Reaction:** The creations of chromatic chords in Robert Schumann's kinderscenen are emotional as a result of the sociological traits of the Romantic period. The emotional content are reflected through chromatic arpeggiation as in bars 1,2,10,17 of Bittendes kind (Entreating/pleading child). Consecutive and repetitive uses of chromatic chords as in bars 5,7,9,11 are expression of emotions.

Above all, the use of chromatic arpeggiation, chromatic chords, chromatic notes, and chromatic embellishment in all the scenes of the kinderscenen is an interpretation of the concept of expressionism. This also reveals his personality as an extrovert, introvert, dreamer and someone who is passionate.

Schumann's use of chromatics in kinderscenen reflected artistic instinct, cultural diversity and organized political or social revolt.

Robert Schumann's concept of chromaticism as employed in kinderscenen showed that he was thoroughly committed intellectually and emotionally to the idea of music being composed to register the feelings, thoughts and impressions garnered by a sensitive spirit on its journey through life.

His frequent resolution of chromatically altered, borrowed, diminished and augmented chords is a reflection of his expressionistic perception about life through his thoughts and feelings.

The application of chromatics by in kinderscenen depicts the painting of glorious miniature pictures of the life of children.

The impressionistic character of Robert Schumman was exhibited through his concept of chromaticism whereby some impressions were made by the sudden use of chromatic chord at the beginning of some scenes which is dependent on the title of the scene; for instance Robert Schumann altered traditional chords (or harmony) by a semitone and thereby breaking down the whole traditional system of harmonic movement or progression.

The use of chromatics as in non-functional chords and unresolved chords in some of the scenes like "Far Away Places", "Curious Story" and "Complete Happiness" was a true replacement of a slower, simpler way of life with a faster and more complicated one which brought on sadness, depression, confusion and many other ills that can only be attributed to the increasing role and control of technology in the lives of people when the rural, agricultural way of life was declining.

There were some repetitive chromatic inflections in some bars of the music as shown in the analysis of kinderscenen to give affirmative statements or an impressionistic art form in a particular scene.

Certainly, it is possible, if not essential, to discuss chromatic techniques in terms directly derived from such branches of mathematics as set theory and group theory. But chromatic music has the best chance of success when initial planning stimulates the composer to think afresh about the most fundamental of all creative enterprises the tension and interaction between, and possible eventual intersection of, things which are (relatively) fixed and things which are (substantially) free.

Robert Schumann's chromatic concepts are characterized by the sociological and expressionistic traits of the Nineteenth Century music. He was influenced by his personality and sociological identity as deduced from kinderscenen.

I hope this research serves as an inspiration for musicologists to filtering concepts based on sociological, emotional and socio-cultural view through analytic means with a notion to bridging the gap between technicality and simplicity or musicology and anthropology.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Undoubtedly, the purpose of this study has been realized by extracting the symbolic meanings from the analysis of Robert Schumann's works selected from the Nineteenth Century.

This study offers useful information on the use and concept of chromaticism and theoretical structure of chromaticism in the selected works of Robert Schumann.

The emphasis on the concept of chromaticism from musicological, psychological and sociological point of view has aided in formalizing, and revalidating the chromatic theories of theorists for the utilization of musicologists.

The discoverable motives are investigated within the context of the proposition by demystifying technical analysis into simplified deductions.

The works of Robert Schumann have been x-rayed with the aid of chromatic theory analysis by considering the intervallic relationship between the notes that make up chromatic chords and melodic lines.

The use of chromatics in his works is simply a reflection of his thoughts, which emanated from his own philosophy of life and his sociological or cultural identity.

His techniques deviate from, when emphasis is laid on order, logic and tradition, which are the characteristics of the period of equilibrium (classical period). The authenticity in his music is as a result of an age of exuberant self-analysis, self-expression and continuous revolt.

In addition, this qualitative research which is exploratory can be used as a basis for later quantitative research hypothesis. Also it will serve as source of inspiration to scholars of various disciplines for deriving research topics and propositions.

Nonetheless, the most unique idea generated through this study is the filtering of denotative meanings (which are symbolic) from the evaluation of chromatic forms as applied in the selected data from the nineteenth century.

On a general view of writings on chromaticism and full-length studies of the particular composers or practitioners of the historical development of chromatic music since 1900, it reveals from an early stage that absolute consistency and uniformity of terminology is not to be expected

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has successfully validated the capability of theory of 'symbolism' in construing the 'concept' of chromaticism in the selected works. Consequently, it has induced philosophical innovations in music.

This exploration of chromaticism vehemently provides avenue for linking composers' sociological traits (as inferred from their biographies) with the simplified and resultant symbolic meanings.

Identification of chromatic notes and chromatic chords (harmony) in the selected works of Robert Schumann offers useful musicological information to music scholars for music scholarship, music criticism and further research.

The examination of form of chromatic structure employed in the music of Robert Schumann selected for this investigation promotes high level of musicianship, aesthetic values and music appreciation.

The inferred symbolic meanings that are demystified from technical analysis of chromatic melody, chromatic chords (harmony) through interpretation analysis bridge the gap between musicology and anthropology.

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